TL214

Joint Statement to the European Community Summit Lisbon, 26 & 27 June 1992 on the situation in Occupied East Timor

The undersigned organisations address the following statement to the Summit of the European Community as the Portuguese Presidency of the EC draws to a close:

Portugal took over the Presidency of the European Community seven weeks after Indonesian troops opened fire on a peaceful demonstration at the Santa Cruz Cemetery, in Dili, the capital of East Timor, killing at least 180 people and wounding many more. This atrocity plunged the entire people into mourning. Nothing the forces of occupation has done since then has alleviated the profound grief of the East Timorese people. Under the new military commander, Brig.General Theo Syafei who has banned visits by foreign journalists, the people of East Timor live in the grip of terror, prevented from making any protest or informing the outside world of their opposition to the continued occupation of their country.

It is incumbent on the heads of state of the European Community to give due recognition to the grave situation in East Timor in the Communiqu they issue at the end of their Summit Meeting in Lisbon. The following points in particular need to be addressed:

Human rights and foreign aid

On 28 November 1991, two weeks after the Santa Cruz Massacre, the EC Council of Ministers adopted a Declaration explicitly linking foreign aid to human rights observance. Since then, however, the Community has failed to exert pressure on Indonesia to improve the human rights situation in East Timor.

In March this year, Indonesia cut aid links with the Netherlands which, along with Denmark, had suspended aid to Indonesia in response to the Santa Cruz atrocity. Turning principle on its head, Indonesia accused the Dutch government of using aid for purposes of intimidation. It is a matter of profound regret that the EC failed to respond to Indonesia's attempt to subvert the Community's policy of linking aid to human rights observance.

The Summit should condemn Indonesia for its rejection of the universal principle that human rights abuses are the legitimate concern of the international community. All EC member-states which attend the meeting of the Consultative Group on Indonesia in Paris on 16/17 July should undertake to ensure that human rights become the central issue at that meeting. If the EC's acceptance of the principle of aid conditionality is to have any meaning, all EC member states which have aid links with Indonesia should suspend aid until human rights violations in East Timor end, until an international investigation of the Santa Cruz Massacre takes place and until Indonesia recognises the right of the East Timorese people to self-determination.

These guidelines should also be applied when the Community negotiates its new treaty on economic cooperation with ASEAN countries later this year.

The civilian and military trials

To persuade the international community that the Santa Cruz atrocity would be dealt fairly with by the courts, President Suharto ordered his ministers to conduct trials. Ten low- ranking soldiers, court-martialled for 'disobeying orders', have been sentenced to 18 months or even less, although they admitted in court that they opened fire on the demonstrators with fatal consequences; no-one in the army has been tried for murder. By contrast, eight East Timorese victims who survived the bloodbath in Dili are receiving savage sentences; one has been sentenced to six years while another could get life for taking part in the peaceful protest on November 12. In Jakarta, East Timorese who protested peacefully have been given nine and ten years.

The EC Summit should condemn these trials and call for the immediate release of all East Timorese already convicted or about to be convicted. It should stress that the EC will not be satisfied until a proper international investigation of the atrocity has been conducted and those responsible are charged with murder.

Peace talks

At a time when several international conflicts have been or are being solved by negotiation, the need for peace talks to resolve the question of East Timor is paramount. The prospects for peace talks are further enhanced because East Timor is now high on the political agenda in Indonesia, due largely to the world outrage at the Santa Cruz Massacre. The East Timor resistance has time and again declared its readiness to enter into peace talks with Indonesia, without preconditions, under UN auspices. The Portuguese government wrote to the UN secretary general earlier this year, proposing that talks on East Timor take place, involving Portugal, Indonesia and East Timorese.

The EC Summit should endorse peace talks with the participation of East Timorese representatives as the crucial step to end 17 years of occupation and ensure due recognition of East Timor's right to self-determination.

This statement is endorsed by:

A Paz é Possivel em Timor-Leste, Portugal.
Agir pour Timor, France.
Association de Solidarité avec Timor Oriental, France.
British Coalition for East Timor, United Kingdom.
Comissão para os Direitos do Povo Maubere (CDPM), Portugal.
Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores Portugueses - CGTP/IN, Portugal
Conselho Nacional da Juventude - CNJ, Portugal
East Timor Ireland Solidarity Campaign, Ireland.
Front Demokrasi Indonesia, Netherlands.
Gesellschaft fr Bedrhte Volker, Germany.
Indonesia Human Rights Campaign (TAPOL), United Kingdom.
Initiative fr die Menschenrechte aller Brger der ASEAN Staaten (IMBAS), Germany.
International Platform of Jurists for East Timor (IPJET), Netherlands.
Komitee Indonesia Netherlands.
Mouvement Chrétien Pour La Paix, Belgium.
Pazifik-Netzwerk, Germany.
Praxis, United Kingdom.
SOS Timor, Belgium
União Geral de Trabalhadores - UGT, Portugal
X minus Y, Netherlands.
Watch Indonesia, Germany.